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of the history of the language to have "finger-boards" set up for him, at any expense to the larger number of students who aim at little more than a practical mastery of the language as it is now. Nor shall I recognize any merit in what is called scientific or scholastic in this noun classification except when it assists the chief purpose in hand, viz., the grouping of the nouns that are declined altogether, or in part, alike, so as most to facilitate the practical command of all their forms. It is idle to claim a profound scientific character for any such classification, which at best is but a mechanical grouping.

The best system can be but one, and its merits are capable of so mathematical a statement that it seems not impossible to demonstrate its superiority. Moreover it is very significant that the vocabulary of the 'Manual,' which is quite adequate to its own needs, should require the "adding of essential forms" to adapt it to the student of the 'scientific' classification. Let it not be overlooked that the knowledge of the gender of each noun which my system enforces as a means of classification is no artificial burden, but is essential to the mastery of the language for its uses in speech and writing. The noun system of the 'Manual,' however, is mine only by adoption. I found it in Germany in a school which attained the most satisfactory results I have ever seen in teaching German to English young men.

Our linguists take just pride in the "American Philological" and "Modern Language" Associations, but is it not possible that the worthy attempt to get papers of profound philological research for conventions and volumes of "Transactions" really diverts the attention of our stronger language teachers from a question far less ambitious but of most vital public interest, viz.—How may these languages under existing conditions be most effectively taught in our schools?

W. C. SAWYER.

San Jose, Cal.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MODERN LANGUAGE PROFESSORSHIPS IN GERMANY.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:—

SIRS: In the June issue (col. 304) of the present volume of your esteemed journal I have

read the following passages, written by PROF. WHITE:

"From this standpoint the position of modern languages in German universities would perhaps not be entirely satisfactory as the norm for corresponding American institutions, although a tendency appears manifest yonder which promises a well-rounded curriculum.....—"The ordinary professorships have been almost invariably held by those whose chief interest lies in this earlier field, while the later period has been in the hands of instructors of a lower rank."

Being myself of opinion that the sentence pronounced some time ago by a celebrated conservative member of the German Reichstag in a debate concerning the universities: "*Sint ut sunt aut non sint*," is totally wrong, I am unable to enter a general protest against a slight stricture like this. Nevertheless, I cannot but draw the attention of the well-informed author to the university of Munich, the only German university in which *teachers* of modern languages and literature are *trained*. When, about twelve years ago, a professorship of modern languages and literature in that university was conferred upon DR. BREYMAN, the latter was especially charged with turning out useful teachers. PROF. BREYMAN's department of the "Neuphilologische Seminar" supplies the Bavarian "Gymnasien" etc. with teachers who are well prepared for their duties. They have come into possession of a method (for teaching pronunciation, grammar and literature) the successfulness of which has been unfailingly recognized.

The lectures on modern and mediæval literature given by the celebrated M. BERNAYS, and by K. HOFMANN, the eminent disciple of DIEZ and SCHMELLER, have purely theoretical tendencies.

RICHARD OTTO.

Rome, Italy.

SPANISH Atestar.

The excellent rendering of *atestados* (D. Q. I, 3) as "full to overflowing," which DR. TODD offers in the last number of this review instead of the traditional "authentic," "unimpeachable," is supported by the following translation which the learned LUDWIG BRAUNFELS¹ gives of the passage in question: "von denen so viele Bücher angefüllt und *vollgepfropft* sind." It

¹Der sinnreiche Junker Don Quijote von der Mancha von MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA, übersetzt, eingeleitet und mit Erläuterungen versehen von LUDWIG BRAUNFELS. Stuttgart, Verlag von W. Spemann, 1884. 4 bde.

may not be out of place here to call the attention of students of CERVANTES' immortal work to BRAUNFELS' translation, which for accuracy and faithfulness to the spirit of the original is fully equal to that of ORMSBY.

HENRY R. LANG.

New Bedford, Mass.

DERIDES.

In MILTON's line,

"Sport that wrinkled Care derides,"

is it not possible that the poet had in mind the French *dérider*, rather than the Latin *derideo*? Littré defines *dérider*, "effacer les rides; ôter au front toute apparence soucieuse."

The line would then mean, "Recreation, that smooths the wrinkles from the brow of care."

W. H. B.

Johns Hopkins University.

SHOULD A POET BE A PHILOLOGIST?

In a very well edited volume of 'Select Poems of Robert Browning' issued in the "English Classic" series under the care of MR. ROLFE and MISS HERSEY, occurs on page 195 the following note: "Line 96, *cowls and twats*. *Twats* is in no dictionary. We now have it from the poet (through DR. FURNIVALL) that he got the word from the Royalist rhymes entitled "Vanity of Vanities," on SIR HARRY VANE's picture. VANE is charged with being a Jesuit.

"Tis said they will give him a cardinal's hat:
They sooner will give him an old nun's twat."

"The word struck me," says BROWNING, "as a distinctive part of a nun's attire that might fitly pair off with the cowl appropriated to a monk."

And yet this word is in many a dictionary (notably BAILEY, vol II, ed. 1737; WRIGHT, ed. 1857; HALLIWELL, ed. 1881), and its relation to the M. H. G. *Zwatzler* can be easily set forth.

MONK.

'AS SHE IS SPOKE.'

No one need deplore the lack of material, who should set himself to make a pathological museum of linguistic malformations. Alienists, they say, come to regard every one as insane.

There is no pleasure or profit in making a collection of broken bottles, in fact any one can break as many bottles as he cares to pay for. It is when a man imagines that his particular broken ware is whole, that his case is worth studying; and then there's that "plaguy hundredth chance" that it may turn out to *be* whole after all. Let us be thankful to the neologists, even if they do not mark all their discoveries with stars.

Some may like this construction, which I find in the New York *Evening Post* for May 14, 1887: "Some of the vessels . . . resisted successfully one vessel to be taken by another."—Probably few of MR. GEO. E. MCNEILL's hearers (of the Labor Party) failed to understand him when he said, as quoted in the Boston *Transcript*, July 8, 1887: "Once we were without the benefit of clergy, but now we have the sympathy and help both of Protestant Ministers and Catholic Priests."—Perhaps some dictionary may contain the definition of the last word of the sentence which was uttered by a maker of nautical instruments: "Though he was in the merchant service, yet he was a fine lunarian."—Some colored people in New Bedford talk about the "Lion gale," as the equinox draws near. Our janitor explains: "They are that ignorant, you know, they think it's called so because it is so boisterous."—*Portière* does not fit some Yankee lips as well as "Portera."—A business man of my acquaintance insisted that it *was* "insomania" that afflicted MR. JAY GOULD; for he read it in a newspaper.

ANDREW INGRAHAM.

New Bedford, Mass.

BRIEF MENTION.

The summer months have ushered into existence a new periodical, to which we now, at our earliest opportunity, extend a hearty welcome. With some fitness of phrase it may be said that the *American Notes and Queries* was for a short time, at the beginning of its career, an emblem of the months that witnessed its inception and early life. Born in the not too serious though promising month of May, it soon fulfilled one and another pledge of pleasant fruits, and then on sturdy stalk yielded the golden corn of solid worth. This weekly visitor with its treasures new and old